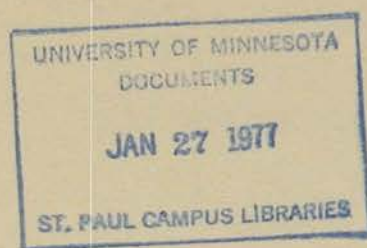


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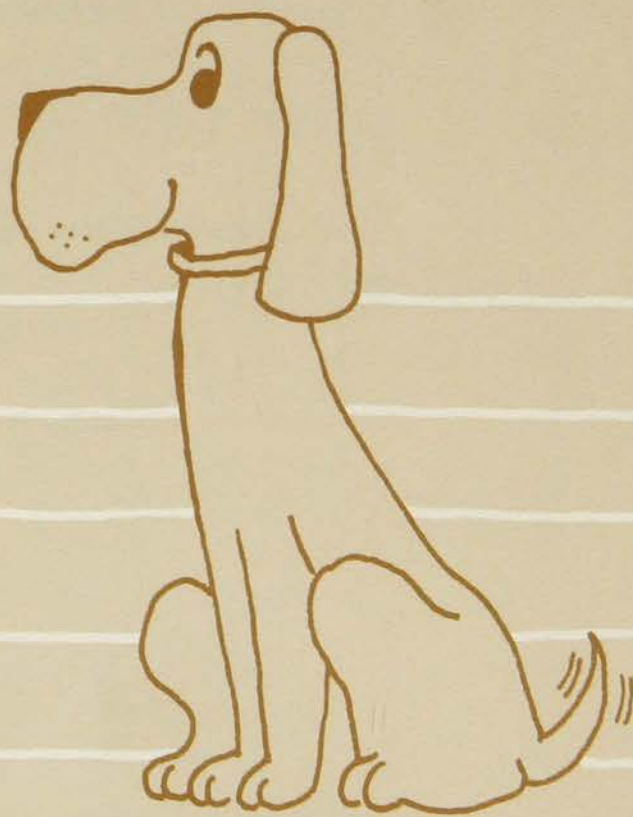
Dog Obedience

4-H M-220

1971



Agricultural Extension Service
University of Minnesota



Leader Guide:
Outline for Nine Lessons

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DOG OBEDIENCE

Leader Guide:

Outline for Nine Lessons

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State 4-H Office

You and Your Dog

A 4-H Dog Care and Training Project

In order to support the 4-H dog project and assist in its implementation throughout Minnesota, a State 4-H Dog Advisory Committee representing each extension district provides guidelines for the development of 4-H club youth through their involvement in the 4-H dog project.

Volunteer leaders working with young people and their dogs are encouraged by the advisory committee to include lessons on dog care and obedience training. The young, new dog owner needs basic information on proper feeding, grooming, health care, and general training before he is ready for obedience training.

A well-rounded training course should include sessions for each topic, using professional dog trainers, veterinarians, and other experts whenever possible.

The following nine lesson plans on obedience training have been printed as a guide for adults serving youth involved with the 4-H Dog Care and Training Project.

Dog Obedience Lesson #1

Exercise: "heel and sit"

Each handler should have a chain link collar and leather leash for his dog--demonstrate how to put on the choke collar. Explain the position of the dog (left side of handler). Have each handler take off and put on the choke collar several times to be sure the collar is on correctly. Have all handlers and dogs form a circle or square so they can watch you demonstrate the "heel and sit" exercise. Use your own dog or a new dog for the demonstration.

Demonstration procedure:

1. Explain that the exercise is called "heel and sit."
2. Explain what the commands are.
3. Demonstrate and explain the exercise--be sure to step off on your left foot.
4. Have the handlers do the exercise on your command.
5. Try to watch each one and correct any mistakes.

Reminder to all instructors: When you use a dog from your class to demonstrate exercises, be sure to talk to the dog and let him know you are not going to hurt him. The dog will cooperate more if you give him a chance to know you.

Keep reminding:

1. Walk briskly.
2. Get slack in the leash and use leash for correction.
3. Do not wait for your dog.
4. "Talk" to your dog.
5. Don't forget to praise your dog.
6. You MUST work with your dog at least 10 to 15 minutes every day (repeat this!).
7. When starting from a "halt," give the name of the dog, the command "heel," and step off with the left foot.

You should:

1. Encourage the handlers.
2. Help outside of class a handler who is having trouble with a particular exercise or with his dog.

Once the dogs are pretty well under control, explain to the handlers the proper position for the dog in the "at heel" position.

If the dog is sitting correctly at the handler's left side, the handler should be able to put his hand down and have it rest on top of the dog's head. This "at heel" position applies when the dog is sitting or walking.

For best results, both from the standpoint of the handler's and the dog's understanding, try to limit your working sessions to 20 minutes. Give handlers and dogs a 10- to 15-minute rest period and start again.

For the first 4 or 5 weeks, you will notice very little progress. Keep working and keep repeating. Do not lose patience.

Dog Obedience
Lesson #2

Exercise: "about turn"

Repeat the heel and sit exercise.

1. Check collars to be sure they are on correctly.
2. Watch for crooked sits; have handlers correct the problem.
3. Go through the demonstration again if you see a number of handlers having trouble.
4. Suggest ways to correct the problem if handlers are having trouble.
5. Be sure to remind the handlers to step off on the left foot and halt with the left foot.

Demonstration procedure:

1. Explain the exercise called "about turn."
2. Explain that there is no command necessary from handler to dog except the word "heel."
3. Demonstrate how to do the exercise.
4. When demonstrating, be sure to call the handlers' attention to how to walk (take short steps) when making the about turn.
5. Tell the handlers not to wait for the dog but to use the leash to correct any problems.
6. Do not let the dog get into a habit of heeling wide on the about turns.

Dog Obedience
Lesson #3

Exercise: "Figure 8"

Repeat the "heel and sit" and "about turn" exercises.

1. Check collars.
2. Watch for wide heeling, lagging, and forging.
3. Remind about starting and stopping on the left foot.
4. Remind to use the left hand on the leash for correction.
5. Remind to get slack in the leash.
6. Demonstrate the exercises again if necessary.

Demonstration procedure:

Place two handlers in the center of the ring (with or without their dogs), 8 feet apart and facing each other (these are called "posts").

Bring in the handler and dog who will perform the exercise and place them even with and midway between the posts.

Explain to the handler that he may go either to his right or his left.

Remind the handler:

1. not to step off until he has given the dog's name and the command "heel" and then to step off with his left foot first.
2. to try to keep a slack leash.
3. not to let the dog lag on the outside turn.
4. not to let his dog sniff the post.
5. that he and his dog will be required to make two turns around each post, with one halt half-way through and a halt for the finish.
6. to watch his dog and be sure it does not sniff the floor or the post.
7. that when using the leash to correct, use short jerks, not pulls, to get response from the dog.

Dog Obedience Lesson #4

Exercise: "long sit and down"

Repeat lessons 1, 2, and 3.

Also, make sure collars are on correctly. Dogs should be sitting at heel position now without the handler giving the command "sit" in any heeling exercise.

The handler always should say the dog's name and give the command "heel" before starting.

At this point in the training, the instructor should explain the many uses of the word "no." To mention two:

--When dog is heeling wide, ahead, or lagging, the handler should use the command "no" and the command "heel" to get the dog back into the correct heeling position.

--When the command is given to "sit" in the heel position and the dog is either sitting or standing wide or too far to the rear or too far to the front, the handler should give the command "no," bring the dog into the proper position, then again command "sit." When the dog is in the proper sitting position, be sure to praise it.

In any situation when the dog is not behaving properly, first give the command "no," then make the correction and praise the dog.

Long Sit and Down

All handlers are familiar with the "sit" now. The instruction necessary now is the command, "sit - stay."

Demonstration procedure:

Take your dog or one from class. For this lesson, handlers should keep their dogs on leash.

1. Give the dog the command "sit - stay."
2. Step off on your right foot, just one step. Then turn and face the dog --keep the leash ready for correction, if necessary.
3. If the dog is steady and is staying, take another step backward. If the dog starts to break--be sure to give the command "no - stay" and if necessary, return quickly to the front of the dog and using the leash, command "sit - stay."
 - a. To have the handlers do this exercise, have all handlers and dogs line up side by side. Be sure to keep the dogs on leash.

Lesson #4 continued:

4. Continue this procedure until the dog is steady and the handlers get back the full length of the leash.
5. Returning to the heel position, demonstrate the return, explaining that the dog must not move.
6. Be sure all handlers understand that they never return to their dogs any other way than around the back of the dog.
7. Do not make the dogs stay on the sit (at the end of the leash) for more than a few seconds at first. Then, in future lessons, extend the time until the dogs will stay for a full minute on leash.
8. In later lessons, have the handlers take the leash off and place it behind the dogs, and have handlers go only the distance of the leash--so they can correct if necessary.
9. As the dogs become steadier, have the handlers leave for longer times and go farther from the dog, until they can go approximately 30 feet away with the dog not moving.

Dog Obedience
Lesson #5

Exercise: "stand for examination"

Repeat lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Remind about the proper position of the dog. Demonstration is very important in this exercise. The command is "stand your dog."

Explain the different ways of getting the dog into the standing position. When the dog is standing and fairly steady, the handler should give the command "stay," step off on his right foot, and move out and face the dog. The handler should hold the leash in a slack position but not letting it touch the floor.

A very important point: Be sure the handlers return around the back of the dog. Never allow a handler to return to his dog any other way!!

The dog must remain in the standing position when the handler returns until the command "exercise finished" is given. Ask the handlers to have anyone they know go over, or examine, the dog. This will help the dog understand he must tolerate having strangers touch his head, shoulders, and back.

This exercise can be done either with the handlers and dogs in a circle or in a straight line.

It is sometimes easier for the instructor if all dogs and handlers are lined up side by side about 3 feet apart.

Dog Obedience
Lesson #6

Exercise: "come fore"

Repeat and make corrections on all previous lessons.

Be sure to inform all handlers that this come fore exercise is not an American Kennel Club regular exercise, but is used to start the recall.

Demonstration procedure:

While walking with the dog in the heel position, the handler gives the command "come" and at the same time backs up three or four steps and stops. This will get the dog coming toward the handler. When the handler stops, he should use his left hand on the leash, keeping it tight, to get the dog into the sitting position in front of him. When the dog is sitting, the handler should relax the leash. The dog must remain in this position until the instructor gives the command "finish." The handler then gives the dog the command "heel" and the dog should return to the left side position.

The dog may be returned to the left side heel position from the come fore position by going either to the right and behind the handler or to his left. Make the dog walk to the "heel" position using the command and the leash to move the dog. When the dog gets to the "heel" position, he must again sit until the "exercise finished" command is given.

Be sure to remind handlers to praise their dogs at the end of each "exercise finished" command.

The instructor should give the command "come fore." The handler gives only the command "come" to get the dog in front. The instructor then gives the command "finish" and the handler gives the command "heel."

Tell handlers to be sure to have the dog sitting straight with the front. This may be a problem, so catch it as early as possible.

Dog Obedience
Lesson #7

Exercise: "on leash recall"

Repeat and practice all previous lessons.

If dogs and handlers are not working very well on all previous lessons, DO NOT teach this lesson, but wait one more week.

Catch up on any problems. Go over each exercise again with all handlers to be sure they understand and see to it that the dog is working properly.

This is the start of the "recall exercise." Line up all handlers and dogs side by side about 3 feet apart.

Demonstration procedure:

The command to the dog is "sit" and the handler steps away from the dog with his RIGHT foot. Go out to the end of the leash, turn, and face the dog. On the command "call your dog," the handler starts backward for about five to ten steps and stops. At this time the dog should come in to the "come fore" position. Next, give the command "finish" and then the handler gives the dog the command "heel" again to get the dog into the heel position (the same procedure as in the come fore exercise).

Dog Obedience
Lesson #8

Exercise: "off leash heeling"

Repeat all previous exercises and make any necessary corrections.

Demonstration procedure:

This exercise is performed like "on leash heeling," except that the dog walks at heel with leash control.

The best way to start the "off leash" exercise is to have handlers take their dogs off leash while they are walking, rather than from sitting at heel position.

Also start the "come fore" exercise off leash at this time.

If the dog starts to leave the handler, put him back on leash and continue on leash for a while before taking the dog off again.

Dog Obedience
Lesson #9

Exercise: "off leash recall"

Do this exercise with just one or two dogs at a time.

Demonstrate with your own dog, or pick a handler and dog that have been doing pretty well and use them for the demonstration.

The commands from the instructor are:

1. "leave your dog."
2. "call your dog."
3. "finish."

The handler should:

1. command his dog to "sit" and then leave for the far end of the mat.
2. call his dog's name and give the command "come."
3. command his dog to "heel" to finish the exercise.

In this exercise, the dog must wait in the sitting position until the handler calls and then must come in smartly to the come fore position and wait until the handler gives the command "heel."

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